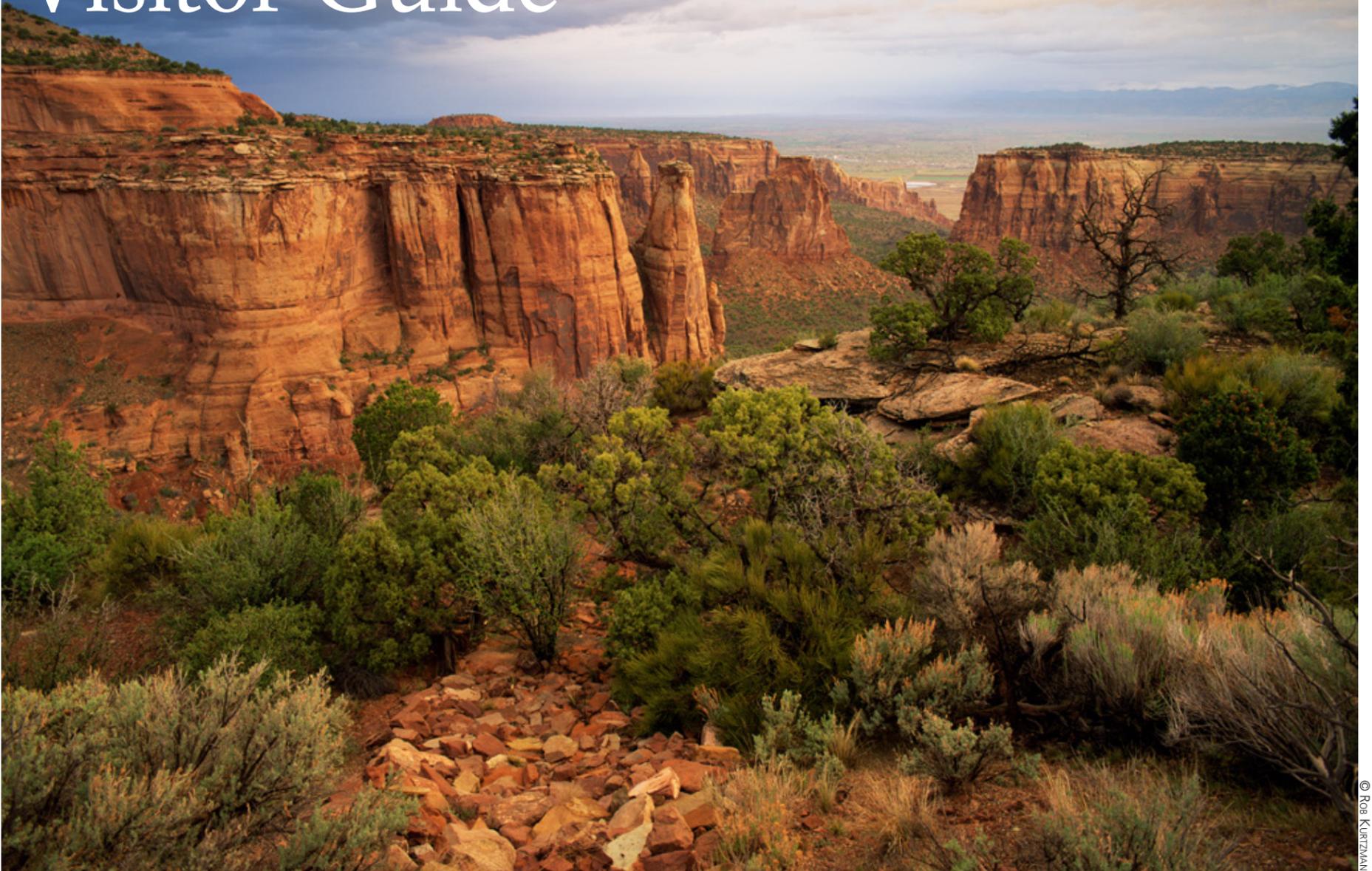




Visitor Guide



© Rob Kurtzman

Exploring the Monument

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE DISCOVERED ONE OF WESTERN COLORADO'S HIDDEN GEMS. COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT, THE 25TH UNIT ESTABLISHED IN OUR NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, LIES ON THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE COLORADO PLATEAU AND CONTAINS THE BREATHTAKING RED ROCK CANYONS THAT MAKE THIS REGION UNIQUE. DISCOVERING THE MONUMENT WAS HALF THE FUN. NOW YOU GET TO DECIDE HOW YOU WILL SPEND YOUR TIME HERE.

GO FOR A DRIVE

Cruise the historic Rim Rock Drive and enjoy steep canyon walls, towering monoliths and balanced rocks along the way. As its name implies, the 23-mile road travels along the rims of the park's major canyons. The entire drive through the park takes around an hour. There are 19 overlooks with interpretive signs, so make sure you budget time to stop and take in the views. Some of our favorite overlooks are Cold Shivers Point, Ute Canyon View, Grand View, Independence Monument Overlook and Book Cliffs View. See pages 2 and 3 for road safety tips and a list of accessible overlooks.

STOP BY THE VISITOR CENTER

Just four miles from the West (Fruita) Entrance, the visitor center is a great place to start your adventure. Learn more about the park's geology, ecology and human history through interactive exhibits and videos. Shop for monument merchandise, field guides, t-shirts and more in the

store. See page 3 for a detailed map and suggested activities in and around the visitor center.

TAKE A HIKE

Whether you're a mountain goat or a first-time hiker, you'll have no problem finding a suitable trail here. The park's 45 miles of trails range from short walks to all-day treks through rugged canyons. See pages 4 and 5 for a map and detailed hiking information.

RIDE YOUR BIKE

Experienced riders should try the Grand Loop, a challenging 33-mile ride across Rim Rock Drive and back along county roads. If you're looking for an easier ride, start at the visitor center or Cold Shivers Point and ride across the top of Rim Rock Drive. See page 4 for more information on bicycling.

SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

Spend the night in the frontcountry at Saddlehorn Campground or among red rocks on a backpacking trip. The

Saddlehorn Campground is first-come, first-served with a camping fee of \$20/night. Free backcountry camping permits are available at the visitor center. Check page 3 for more camping information.

EARN YOUR BADGE

Children of all ages can become official Junior Rangers. Grab an activity guide at the visitor center and learn how you can help protect the park while you learn about and explore its resources. More for kids on page 7.

JOIN A RANGER

Learn about the monument from an expert at a ranger-led porch talk, walk or evening program. See page 3 for more information on ranger programs.

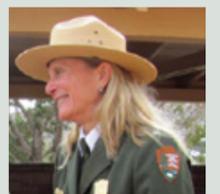
No matter what you choose to do, we hope you enjoy this amazing national treasure and visit us again.

Welcome, or welcome back, to Colorado National Monument! Every day we have the opportunity to greet visitors from around the world, as well as our local community, and listen to their stories about their first, and perhaps lasting impressions, of the abruptly arising, reddish-orange backdrop to this Grand Valley and Interstate 70 corridor.

Colorado National Monument holds many meanings to many people. To some, it is a place of quiet contemplation or refuge from daily hustle and bustle. To others, a smile at seeing a yellow-headed collared lizard or a blooming cactus on a springtime hike. Whether you discovered the monument on a ranger-guided event, or perhaps 'by accident,' chances are you were struck by the awe-inspiring scenery that also drew our early founder, John Otto, over one hundred years ago. About these canyons Otto had said, they "feel like the heart of the world to me."

Compelling stories such as Otto's exist within all of our 400+ units within the National Park Service. The state of Colorado alone has 18 of these "national treasure boxes" either set aside by Congress or proclaimed by the president (national parks, monuments, historic trails, historic sites, and preserves are some of these types of units). Our mission? To preserve these areas and their meanings forever. Throughout this visitor guide, learn more about what makes this place such a grand sense of space! Thanks for taking time out of your busy lives to experience your national park areas.

Thank you,
Lisa Eckert
Lisa Eckert
Superintendent



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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

**Colorado National Monument
Visitor Guide**

Published By

Colorado National Monument Association, a non-profit organization that supports interpretive and educational programs at Colorado National Monument

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Shaping the Land

HANK SCHOCH *CHIEF RANGER, RETIRED*



Liz Barrett

YOU MIGHT MARVEL AT THE DRAMATIC landscape of Colorado National Monument and wonder, how did these intricate canyons and massive rocks come to be? The answers are found before you, some larger and more dramatic than others.

Flash floods, one of the most exciting forces behind these chaotically carved canyons, are both wondrous and frightening. These rapid events move and break large amounts of rock altering our landscape in hours. Witnesses to these dramatic storm surges are privileged to a show of thick brown liquid torrents spilling off towering cliff rims into the canyon depths. This wondrous scene is active weathering and erosion right before you.

Water, the most effective agent of weathering and erosion, works on a variety of scales, from the microscopic to the massive. Imagine a brief, intense downpour. Now slow things down. As those first droplets spatter on exposed slick-rock and bare earth, the tiny impacts begin to dislodge bits of sand, silt, and clay. As the rain persists, droplets join together forming sheet-wash, growing until the mass flows downhill with gravity. The water gains momentum and strength as it joins other small streams, while also picking up burdens of abrasive particles along the way. With only thin soils and sparse vegetation to impede it, the running water continues to grow, forming tiny rivers which quickly merge strength to fill and scour the usually-dry stream channels. Eventually, the flood waters find their way into the central drainages of the larger canyons, where together they are often capable of uprooting trees and moving boulders as large as automobiles.

Another form of physical weathering and erosion often occurs during the early spring and late fall when days are mild and nights frosty. Water that has seeped into small cracks in the rock may freeze, expand, and even split large rocks. Repeated episodes of this freeze-and-thaw process, acting with gravity - can pry immense slabs of rock from their moorings and send them crashing downward.

In the mid-1980s, an intact slab of Entrada Sandstone (25 feet wide, 40 feet tall, and 15 feet thick!) fractured down onto Rim Rock Drive, closing the road for several months until engineers devised a way to safely remove that 400-ton chunk of solid rock without further damaging the historic roadway beneath it.

Water also can work in quieter, more subtle ways to shape the land. Raindrops react chemically with carbon dioxide from the atmosphere forming a weak acid that attacks and destroys soft calcium carbonate cement, the natural binding glue in most local sandstones.

On the microscopic level water migrates slowly through porous sandstone. This groundwater may contain various salts. When the water reaches the surface and evaporates, salt crystals are created. These crystals can displace, pry loose, and liberate individual grains of sand or sometimes exfoliate thin sheets of rock, a process known as sapping. Several decades ago, NASA sent a team of geologists to the monument to study groundwater sapping in large drainage features; they wanted to replicate features that could be found on Mars, a distant planet so conspicuously devoid of running waters. To find examples of this interesting process, look for residual deposits of salty evaporates on damp canyon headwalls where seeps and springs are evident.

Wind also contributes to the creation of the landscape. Swirling winds, laden with grit and tiny sand particles, abrasively erode holes in the rock layers creating nice places for birds to build nests, or hand holds for rock climbers.

Plants and animals also have their part to play. Roots of plants probe and pry and secrete chemicals that hasten the breakdown of rock into soil. Critters paw, scratch, dig, or burrow into the earth freeing and loosening rock as well - even the lowly ant plays a part in this big cycle. Imagine how many ants are here at Colorado National Monument, and how many tons of earth they move around each year as they excavate their nests and build their mounds.

Rim Rock Drive

The 23-mile Rim Rock Drive is one of the grandest scenic drives in the American West. While it offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience this spectacular landscape; its hairpin turns, steep grades and unstable rock formations can make this historic road dangerous. Please use caution while you drive or ride your bicycle, and always share the road.

Staying Safe while you Drive

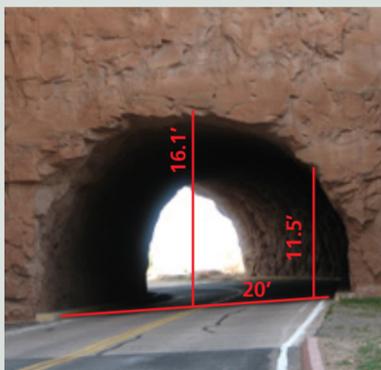
- Obey all posted speed limits.
- Watch for rocks in the road. Never attempt to move rocks or boulders. To report rocks in the road, call a park ranger at 970-858-3617 ext. 360.
- Watch for bicyclists and wildlife.
- When passing a bicyclist, allow at least three feet of clearance.

Tunnel Safety

Rim Rock Drive has three tunnels that were blasted and shaped in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). You will pass through two short (less than 250 feet in length), curved tunnels on the west side and one long (530 feet in length), straight tunnel on the east side.

- Lights are required in the tunnels.
- Watch out for bicyclists.
- Do not pass vehicles or bicyclists.
- No pedestrians in or around the tunnels.

Tunnel Clearance



Blood, Sweat & Teamwork

ERIC SANDSTROM *PARK RANGER*

RIM ROCK DRIVE STRETCHES 23 miles from the east entrance near Grand Junction to the west entrance near Fruita, weaving its way up, over and through rock formations millions of years old.

Labor for the historic road project drew heavily from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs that helped Americans dig themselves out of the Great Depression.

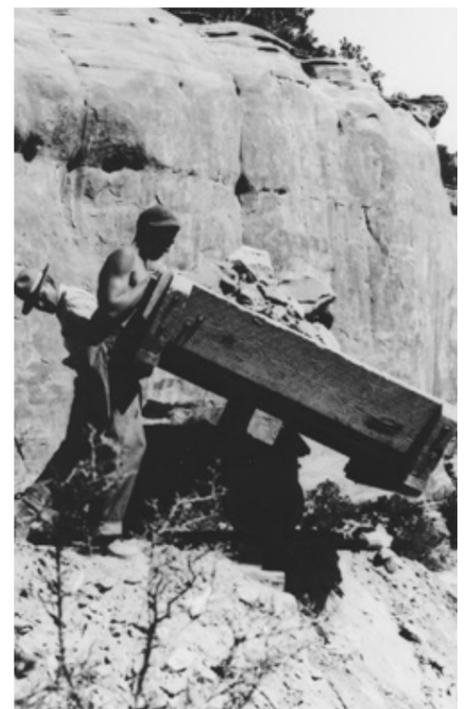
The roadbuilders were single men, ranging in age from 18 to 25, and dirt poor. For their backbreaking labor, the men earned a dollar a day. Room and board was furnished in camps in the monument. This massive workforce of sinew and muscle labored

year-round, pulverizing untold tons of Entrada Sandstone.

Thousands of road builders labored here over the course of 17 years in the mid-20th Century. They drilled 12-foot-deep holes in rock, tamping them with dynamite and blasting a safe route along the canyon rims to make way for motorists and cyclists of the future.

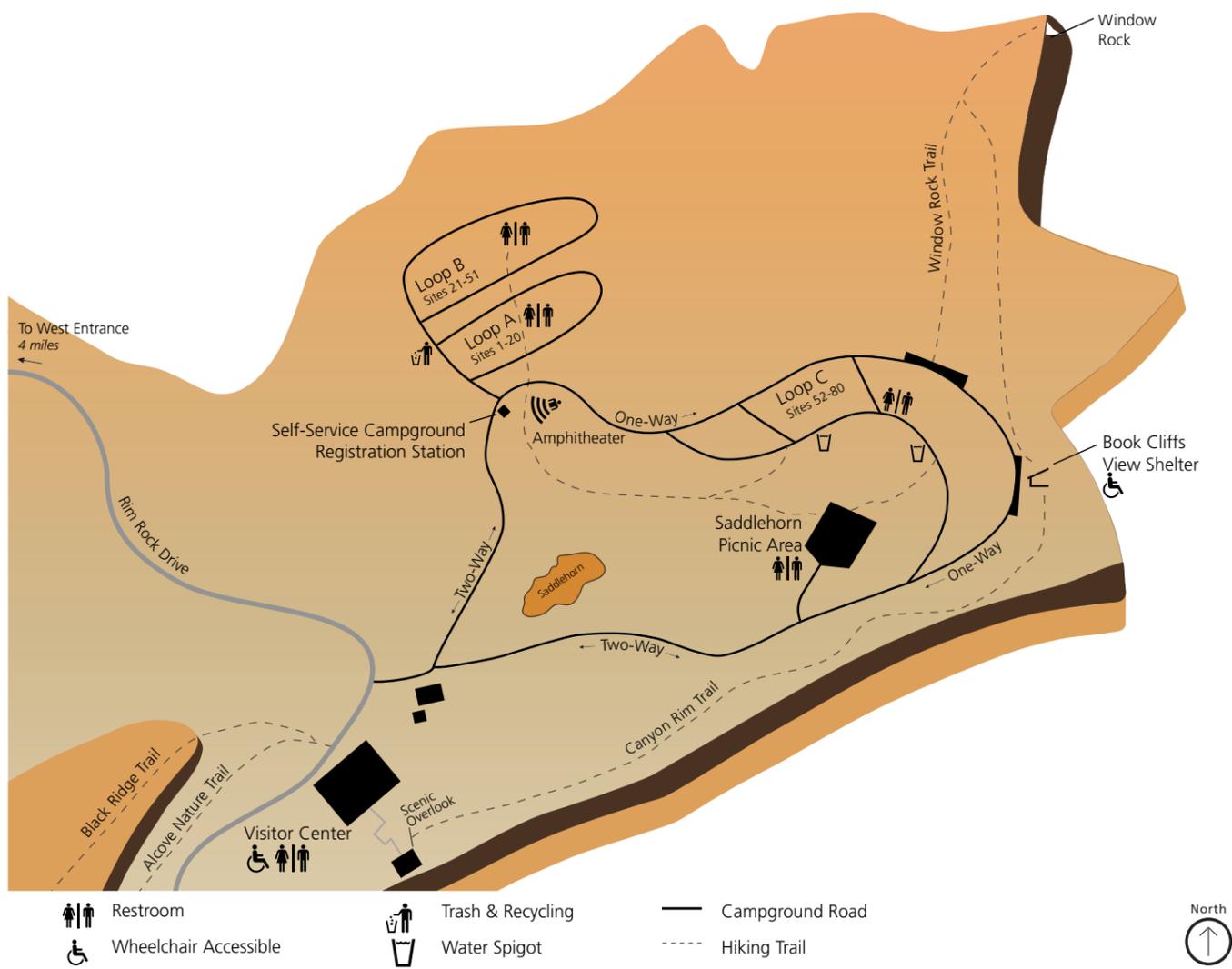
It was dangerous work at the edge of canyons 500 feet deep, with risks that would leave most people petrified in fear. Tragically, 11 road builders died on the job.

Most of Rim Rock Drive was completed when World War II began and the CCC was disbanded. The National Park Service finished the job in 1950.



Saddlehorn Area

Exploring around the Visitor Center and Campground



Where can I...

...walk my dog?

On paved roads and in the campground. Please keep your pets on a leash at all times. Never leave pets in your car; high temperatures in an enclosed vehicle are dangerous. Stop by the visitor center for a map of pet-friendly trails outside the park.

...find a restroom?

Restrooms are available on the east side of the monument at Devils Kitchen Picnic Area, and on the west side at the visitor center and Saddlehorn Campground and Saddlehorn Picnic Area.

...have a picnic?

There are three picnic areas in the park; Devils Kitchen, Saddlehorn and the visitor center. Devils Kitchen and the visitor center have shade shelters.

...fill my water bottles?

Drinking water is available in all picnic areas, the campground and visitor center.

...ride my bicycle?

Bicycles are allowed on paved roads only. You may not ride on any trails.

Accessibility

We are constantly striving to make your visit more enjoyable by making facilities as accessible as possible.

Picnic Areas

The visitor center and Devils Kitchen Picnic Area have accessible picnic tables.

Restrooms

The campground, visitor center and picnic areas have accessible restrooms.

Overlooks

Independence Monument View, Cold Shivers Point, Book Cliffs View

Programs & Exhibits

All interpretive exhibits, videos and porch talk programs are fully accessible. Audio descriptions are available for the exhibits. Both videos are T-coil compatible and headsets are available for the hearing impaired.



Learn...

EXHIBITS & VIDEOS

Get an introduction to the geology, ecology and history of the monument at the visitor center. You can tour hands-on exhibits or watch one of the 12-minute introductory videos.

RANGER PROGRAMS

Learn more about the forces that shaped the canyons, the animals that roam here or the colorful human history on a ranger-led walk, porch talk or evening program. Schedules and program details available at the visitor center or online www.nps.gov/colm.

VISITOR CENTER STORE

The Colorado National Monument Association store at the visitor center has everything from guide books to t-shirts. All profits benefit the park.

Hike...

CANYON RIM TRAIL

You will enjoy amazing views of the park's famous monoliths (rock towers) on this easy hike. Start behind the visitor center and follow the rim of Wedding Canyon. (0.5 mile one-way to the Book Cliffs View Shelter, easy)

ALCOVE NATURE TRAIL

Discover the wonders of the pinyon-juniper woodland on this self-guided nature trail that leads to a cozy slot canyon. (0.5 mile one-way, easy)

WINDOW ROCK TRAIL

Start at the Window Rock Trailhead on the Campground Loop Road or the Book Cliffs View Shelter and walk down to an overlook of Window Rock. (0.25 mile one-way, easy)

Camp...

SADDLEHORN CAMPGROUND

Camp in this 80-site campground located near the visitor center. Sites are first-come, first-served. Register at the self-service kiosk at the campground entrance.

- Camping fee is \$20/night per site.
- Two cars, three tents and seven people are allowed at each site.
- Restrooms have flush toilets and potable water.
- Recreational vehicles length limit: 40'.
- There are no electric hookups, showers or dump stations.
- No wood fires. Charcoal fires only.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

You must get a free backcountry camping permit at the visitor center before setting off on your adventure.

Visitor Center Hours

May 24 th –Labor Day	9am–6pm
September–mid November	9am–5pm
Mid November–early March	9am–4pm
March–May 23 rd	9am–5pm
Closed December 25 th	

Special Events

Freedom Flies High	July 4
Night Sky Festival	August 2–3
National Public Lands Day	September 28
John Otto Day	October 6

Fee Free Days

National Park Week	April 22–26
National Park Service Birthday	August 25
National Public Lands Day	September 28
Veterans Day Weekend	November 9–11

Greening our Parks

In an effort to decrease solid waste and litter, national parks around the country are eliminating the sale of disposable water bottles. We are proud to join this effort and will no longer sell bottled water in the park. BPA-free reusable plastic and metal water bottles are available for sale in the visitor center store. Water bottle filling stations are located at all picnic areas, in the campground and at the visitor center. Thanks for helping us do our part to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions.



Be Safe Out There

On the trail...

- There is no drinking water in the canyons. The park does not sell bottled water. Be prepared with extra water. Fill your bottles at Devils Kitchen and Saddlehorn Picnic Areas, the visitor center or in the campground.

- Be aware of cliffs. Watch your step and your children at overlooks and cliff edges.

- Protect your skin. Always wear a hat and sunscreen.

- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return. If you become lost, stay in one place and call for help.

- Watch where you put your feet and hands. You share the land with scorpions and rattlesnakes.

- Pay attention to rapidly changing weather. Avoid ridge tops and open areas during lightning storms.

- Be ready for biting gnats May–August. Bring insect repellent.

- Black bears and mountain lions live in and around the park. They are occasionally encountered on trails. Always be aware of their presence here, keep children close and secure your food. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to spot one of these elusive animals.

On your bike...

- You may ride your bicycle **ONLY** on roads (not on trails).

- Obey all traffic laws including speed limits, passing zones and stop signs.

- Ride single file at all times.

- Do not pass vehicles in the tunnels.

- You may encounter large trucks for the first four miles from the east entrance.

- You must have lights for the tunnels.
Front - white light visible from 500 feet
Back - red light visible from 200 feet

- **In case of emergency call 911.**

Where to Hike



Climbers in Monument Canyon



Inside Devils Kitchen



Cairns or art?

Monument Canyon

LOWER MONUMENT CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the west entrance, turn right and drive 2.1 miles on Hwy 340. Turn right at the trailhead sign and follow the gravel driveway to the parking area.

LOWER MONUMENT CANYON TRAIL

For a moderate half-day hike, follow the Lower Monument Canyon Trail to the base of Independence Monument. Desert bighorn sheep also enjoy this sunny trail, so have your camera handy. (2.5 miles one-way, +500 feet, moderate)

MONUMENT AND WEDDING CANYON LOOP

Try this difficult loop for a more adventurous finish to the hike above. From Independence Monument, turn right (north) onto the faint Wedding Canyon Trail. The park does not maintain this trail. It will have rough portions. (5 mile loop, +550 feet, moderate)

UPPER MONUMENT CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the visitor center turn left (east) and drive for 3.8 miles. The trailhead will be on your left.

UPPER MONUMENT CANYON TRAIL

You will descend 700 feet through steep switchbacks in the first 0.5 mile. Make sure you are prepared with enough water and proper footwear. (3.5 miles to Independence Monument, -840 feet, 6 miles to Lower Monument Canyon Trailhead, -1,440 feet, difficult)

COKE OVENS TRAIL

Follow this easy trail down to an overlook of the Coke Ovens. (0.5 mile one-way, -100 feet, easy)

Devils Kitchen Area

DEVILS KITCHEN TRAILHEAD

From the east entrance drive 0.2 miles and turn left into the parking area.

SERPENTS TRAIL

Enjoy a good workout and great views on this well-graded trail. (1.75 miles one-way, +780 feet, moderate)

NO THOROUGHFARE CANYON TRAIL

This narrow canyon is a great place to spot collared lizards. Follow the wash for 1 mile to the first pool and turn around, or continue an additional 0.7 mile to the first waterfall. A rough route continues past the waterfall for 6.5 miles to the Upper Trailhead. (1-2 miles one-way, +100-600 feet, moderate)

DEVILS KITCHEN TRAIL

Look for cairns (rock piles) and carved steps as you ascend a large rock slope into this unique rock formation. (0.75 mile one-way, +300 feet, easy)

ECHO CANYON TRAIL

A spring keeps this lush canyon green throughout the summer. To reach Echo Canyon, follow Old Gordon Trail for 0.5 mile to a signed junction and turn left. (1.5 miles one-way, +300 feet, easy)

Short on time?

OTTO'S TRAIL

From the visitor center drive one mile east to the parking area on your left. Follow this level trail to an overlook of Monument and Wedding Canyons. (0.5 mile one-way, -50 feet, easy)

Corkscrew, Liberty Cap & Ute Canyon Trails

WILDWOOD TRAILHEAD

From the west (*Fruita*) entrance turn right and drive 6.5 miles on Hwy 340. Turn right at the light onto Redlands Parkway. Drive one mile and turn left onto Wildwood Drive. The gravel parking lot will be on your right.

CORKSCREW LOOP

Enjoy great views of the Ute Canyon waterfall on this historic trail. It's best to hike the loop in a counter-clockwise direction by going up the Liberty Cap Trail and down the Corkscrew Trail. (3.3 mile loop, +760 feet, moderate)

LIBERTY CAP TRAIL

Climb for 1.5 miles on this steep, rocky trail to reach the Liberty Cap rock formation, a large sandstone dome. (1.5 miles one-way, +1,100 feet, difficult)

UTE CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the visitor center, turn left onto Rim Rock Drive and drive 9.4 miles. The trailhead will be on your left.

UTE CANYON TRAIL

Ute Canyon offers a nice chance to explore the canyon bottom ecosystem. After the first 0.5 mile, the trail becomes rough and hard to follow. (4.5 miles one-way, -880 feet, difficult)

Protect Your Park

National parks are special places that preserve amazing natural and cultural resources. Thanks for helping protect the plants, animals, rocks and history in this park and other natural areas you visit.

- Leave No Trace. Please do not take anything from the park or leave anything behind. Even food scraps can take years to decompose in the desert.

- Respect wildlife. View from a distance and never feed wild animals. Store all food in your vehicle.

- Don't leave your mark on the park. Carving or scratching into rocks or trees is vandalism.

- Know the rules. Pets and bicycles are not allowed on trails.

Where to Bike

THE GRAND LOOP

Try this 33-mile loop through the Monument for a challenging ride with amazing views. Start at either entrance and ride up and over Rim Rock Drive (23 miles, +2,200 feet). Use Broadway (Hwy 340), South Broadway and South Camp to return to your vehicle.

VISITOR CENTER TO ARTISTS POINT

For a less strenuous option, ride from the visitor center to Artists Point (14 miles roundtrip, +500 feet). Along the way, you'll enjoy great views of Monument Canyon and many of the park's named monoliths (rock towers).

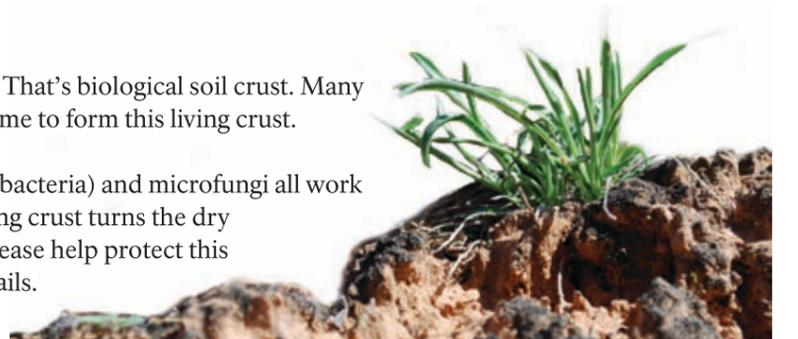


View from the top.

Don't Bust the Crust!

Have you noticed the dark, bumpy soil along the trail? That's biological soil crust. Many small organisms grow together over a long period of time to form this living crust.

Moss, lichen, green algae, cyanobacteria (sigh-AN-oh bacteria) and microfungi all work together to hold sand grains in place. This slow-growing crust turns the dry desert sand into healthy soil where plants can grow. Please help protect this important desert resource by staying on established trails.



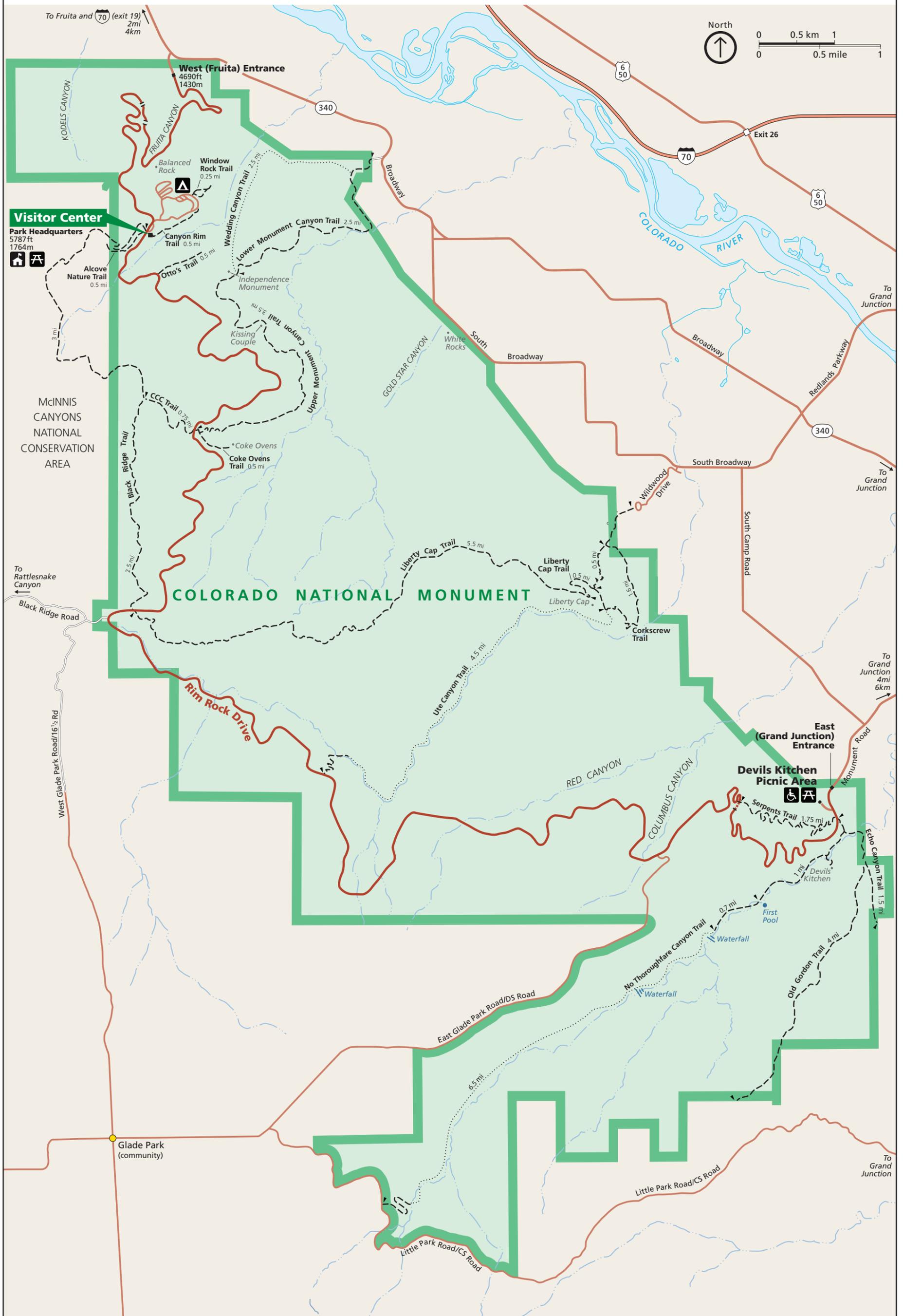
Some land outside the park boundary is privately owned. Please respect the owners' rights and do not trespass.

 Hiking trail
 Unpaved road

 Unmaintained trail
 7mi Distance along trail

 Ranger station
 Wheelchair-accessible

 Campground
 Picnic area



Envision the Vision - Visitor Activity and Commercial Services Plan

LISA ECKERT SUPERINTENDENT

I bring a 29-year snapshot to Colorado National Monument, having worked here twice before as a park ranger. Now, my goal as superintendent is to be that bridge between the past and the future. One way to accomplish this is to complete an environmental assessment (EA) in order to address the numbers and types of special park uses requested by you, members of the public.

As a destination for hundreds of thousands of travelers and park neighbors each year, Colorado National Monument, the 25th unit established in our national park system, helped stimulate more than \$23 million in spending within the local economy during 2011. The monument has become an increasingly popular venue for all kinds of events, large and small, personal and commercial. These uses are covered by special use permits and commercial use authorizations, two very different things. Applications for special use permits increased to 65 in 2012, and the expectations and proposed use of the monument by commercial (for profit) operations has also increased in recent years. The question we all need to address is, “What types of special events and commercial services enhance visitors’ experiences, and what laws and policies exist to regulate the kinds of uses that are appropriate for Colorado National Monument?”

Any time there is a limited resource with competing interests, there will be a diversity of opinions. In the case of the monument, the 23-mile ribbon of road is THE primary access to experience this park. Consider that one historic Rim Rock Drive with its numerous curves and three tunnels, the park’s proximity to a growing population center, the 480,000 national and international visitors each year, and that hundreds of vehicles travel daily to and from Glade Park along a four-mile legal right-of-way. Is there a way to reach consensus?

I say yes. The transparent and collaborative development of a Visitor Activity and Commercial Services Plan (an EA decision document) will help all of us understand how best the monument can manage the increasing numbers of uses proposed for this special place with respect to the NPS mission, *to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.* We invite you to participate in this planning process and we welcome your thoughts and comments. Keep updated by visiting the park’s website throughout the year at www.nps.gov/colm and by visiting the National Park Service Planning, Environment and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/colm>.

Weather Summary

Month	Average High	Average Low	Average Precip.
January	37°F / 3°C	17°F / -9°C	0.6 IN / 1.5 CM
February	46°F / 8°C	24°F / -5°C	0.6 IN / 1.3 CM
March	57°F / 14°C	32°F / 0°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
April	65°F / 19°C	39°F / 4°C	0.9 IN / 2.3 CM
May	76°F / 24°C	48°F / 9°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
June	88°F / 31°C	57°F / 4°C	0.4 IN / 1.0 CM
July	93°F / 34°C	64°F / 18°C	0.7 IN / 1.8 CM
August	90°F / 32°C	62°F / 17°C	0.8 IN / 2.0 CM
September	81°F / 27°C	53°F / 12°C	0.9 IN / 2.3 CM
October	67°F / 20°C	41°F / 5°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
November	50°F / 10°C	28°F / -2°C	0.7 IN / 1.8 CM
December	39°F / 10°C	19°F / -7°C	0.5 IN / 1.3 CM

Weather & Climate

SPRING

This 'shoulder' season between the frigid winters and searing summers usually has consistently pleasant weather. Daytime temperatures are in the 70s and low 80s, while nighttime lows are between 30° and 50°F. Shifting global wind patterns can bring large storm systems. Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

SUMMER

June—August are the park's busiest and hottest months. Temperatures can reach 100°F in the afternoons, so plan your activities for the cooler morning and evening hours. The late summer 'monsoon season' may bring afternoon thunderstorms from the middle of July into September. These storms can cause localized flash floods in the canyons. Be alert for such conditions.

AUTUMN

As the days shorten and the leaves change colors, you'll enjoy mild daytime and cooler evening temperatures. Just as in the spring, the weather can change rapidly. Snowstorms may come as soon as late October. Be prepared for unpredictable weather this time of year.

WINTER

Although the monument receives an average of three feet of snow each year, temperatures and snowfall vary greatly from year to year. During heavy snow years, cross country skiing and snowshoeing are popular on many trails in winter. Rim Rock Drive remains open throughout the winter, but usually has patches of ice and snow.

Canyon Country Wildlife Watching



Desert bighorn sheep ram (male)



Collared lizard



Red-tailed hawk



Midget-faded rattlesnake

Wildlife Watching Etiquette & Advice

During your visit, you may get an opportunity to see desert bighorn sheep scaling cliffs or golden eagles soaring over the canyons. These sightings are a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Even the most seasoned observer can get lost in such moments. It's important to remember that these animals are wild and the monument is their home. People are visitors here. Please be a respectful guest. It will keep you and the wildlife safe.

- Watch from a safe distance. Getting too close to animals causes them stress and may make animals sick or change their natural survival skills.
- Many animals are well camouflaged and can be hard to spot. Look for their movements.
- Never approach, touch or capture animals.
- Keep your voices low, move slowly and never throw rocks or other objects over canyon walls.

The Monument's Most Wanted & Where to See Them

Would you rather see a deer or a bighorn sheep? A golden eagle or a raven? The choice is easy for most of us. Regardless of how intelligent the raven, or swift the deer may be, we are always drawn to the challenge of spotting the less common animals. This desire *can* lead to disappointment, but with a little patience and luck, you may see your bighorn sheep after all. We hope you do, but if not, you'll most likely see lizards and rabbits while you're here.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

These grazers (grass-eaters) have special hooves for gripping rock. Look for them on the sandstone cliffs and rocky slopes along Rim Rock Drive from the West (Fruita) Entrance to Grand View, and along the Monument Canyon Trail.

Collared Lizards

Don't be fooled by their bright colors; these lizards are serious predators and often eat other lizards. The best place to spot them is on the No Thoroughfare Canyon and Lower Monument Canyon Trails. But lizards can be found everywhere!

Giant Desert Hairy Scorpions & Midget Faded Rattlesnakes

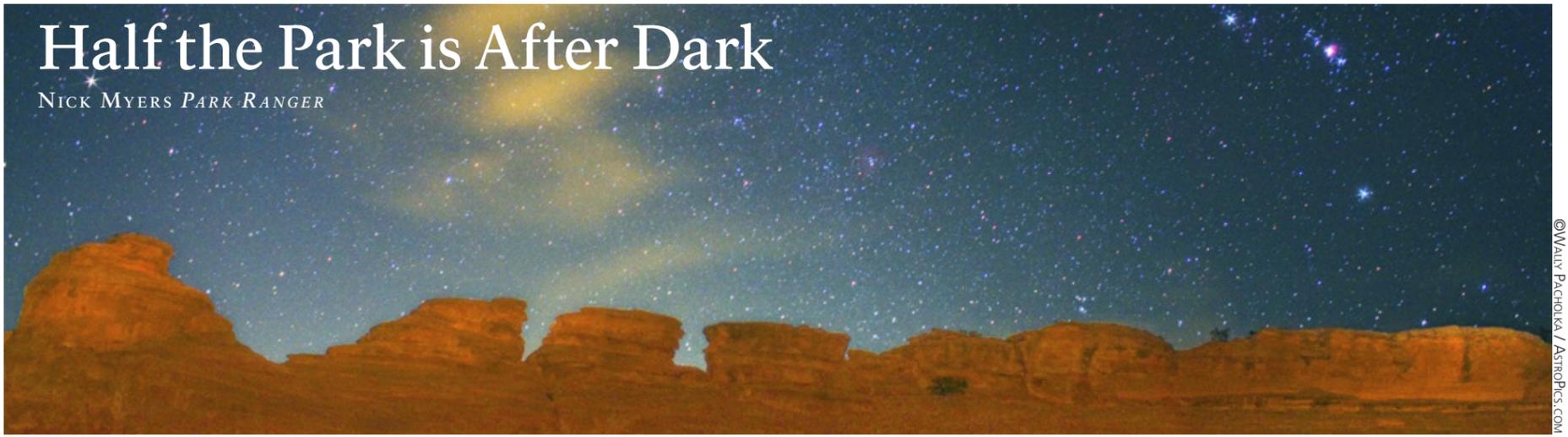
Whether you hope to see them or wish to avoid them, both of these venomous animals are active at night and live under rocks. Most visitors don't ever see them.

Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons & Other Birds of Prey

As the sun warms this land, thermals (rotating air currents) rise from the canyons to carry these majestic birds in search of food. Look for them from overlooks along Rim Rock Drive, Grand View and along the Monument Canyon Trail.

Half the Park is After Dark

NICK MYERS PARK RANGER



©WALTER PAICHOLKA / ASTROPHOTOS.COM

For many of us, the word “dark” conjures up images of scary movies or stories told around the campfire as a child. Darkness has rarely been appreciated and often feared. But this attitude toward a natural part of our world has begun to change in National Park Service sites such as Colorado National Monument.

Beautiful sights emerge after the sun goes down and celestial bodies illuminate the night sky. Magnificent views can connect us to the lives of our ancestors, and offer a glimpse into the intricacies of our universe and distant galaxies.

Here at Colorado National Monument, visitors have the rare opportunity to view some of the darkest skies on the fringe of the largest community on the Colorado Plateau. It is a prime location for the study of dark night skies and the effects of light pollution on the landscape.

As cities grow bigger and development comes closer to national park areas, so does the residual glow of their lights. As a result, our “nightsapes” are rapidly becoming a threatened natural resource.

In the most remote locations on the planet, the Milky Way Galaxy is bright enough to cast a shadow. But as we approach big cities, the Milky Way becomes almost impossible to find. The prospect of losing the opportunity to experience pristine dark skies is real. Future generations may never see the Milky Way.

Why should we care? Darkness is threatened by artificial lighting, which disturbs more than just our skies in national parks. Nocturnal habits of birds and mammals – including humans – are frequently disturbed by light pollution, disrupting their natural rhythms.

Solutions to light pollution are relatively easy to implement and can have an immediate impact. Covering exterior lamps with shields to direct their light downward is one method adopted by both cities and citizens. Taking the time to reevaluate the impact of our exterior lighting is cost effective and hugely beneficial to night skies, the environment and your pocketbook.

Colorado National Monument stands as a spectacular staging area for viewing the delicate structures of the earth and the sky. Take an evening to visit the monument as the sun sets and the stars emerge to offer a different perspective on the value of darkness in our national parks. As you walk out your door, consider the lights on your house and in your neighborhood. Think about the little steps you can take to help preserve our night skies here and at home.

Sunrise & Sunset

Date	Sunrise	Sunset
March 1	6:46am	6:07pm
March 15	7:25am	7:22pm
April 1	6:58am	7:38pm
April 15	6:37am	7:52pm
May 1	6:16am	8:07pm
May 15	6:01am	8:21pm
June 1	5:50am	8:34pm
June 15	5:48am	8:42pm
July 1	5:52am	8:44pm
July 15	6:01am	8:39pm
August 1	6:15am	8:25pm
August 15	6:28am	8:09pm
September 1	6:43am	7:44pm
September 15	6:56am	7:22pm
October 1	7:11am	6:56pm
October 15	7:24am	6:35pm
November 1	7:42am	6:13pm
November 15	6:58am	5:00pm
December 1	7:15am	4:52pm
December 15	7:26am	4:53pm

Full Moons

April 25, May 25, June 23, July 22, August 21, September 19, October 18, November 17, December 17

Earn Your Badge



Hey kids! Do you want to explore, learn about and help protect national parks? If so, then you should become an official Junior Ranger. It usually takes around 2 hours to complete the required activities and go on a hike to earn your badge. Pick up a free activity guide at the visitor center.

If you have a little extra time, check out the Junior Ranger Explorer Backpack. This exciting kit is full of tools and activities to help you explore the monument's rocks, plants and animals. You can check out the backpack from the visitor center for a free three-hour loan.

Desert Detectives

The desert can be a tough place to live. Yet so many plants and animals call this land their home. That is because desert plants and animals have adaptations (special parts or behaviors) that help them survive in this dry, rocky habitat.

Can you find the adaptations (words in **bold** only) hidden in the puzzle?

- pale-colored **fur**
- long **roots**
- sharp **spines**
- tiny **leaves**
- bad **smell**
- waxy** coating
- sticky **hooves** for climbing
- scales** for protection

B T B I W Q C T W B Y Y P N T J K N X X
 L L Q Y I H J J L H B Y C N H V C G W N
 O O X C A K O G Z E P S Q U U A S P E G
 A L I D K J S O O U W Y M L L S E P S D
 C M H A G I P C V D E F A E D G H C Y Z
 N R O O T S I F A E G U N N L U K R O W
 W Z F T U W N J A L S A F U R L F S W I
 Y X A W E K E S W Y E B D B K G E E K C
 J K G W M O S Y V Z B S W K C C D V A X
 I D L U L Z L O N B N C I Z P V G A J M
 Q V Y C I U X D E L P Z A L N Y A E K Q
 D Y J V A N L P X R W Y K Q H O R L Z I



Entrance Fees

- Private, non-commercial vehicle \$10
 - Individual (hiker, bicycle, motorcycle) \$5
- Both are good for seven consecutive days.

Annual & Lifetime Passes

- Colorado NM Annual Pass - \$25
- America the Beautiful: National Parks & Federal Lands Annual Pass - \$80
- America the Beautiful: National Parks & Federal Lands Annual Pass for Active Duty Military & their Dependents - Free
- America the Beautiful: National Parks and Federal Lands Senior Pass (62 and older) - \$10 for Lifetime Pass
- America the Beautiful: National Parks & Federal Lands Access Pass (US citizens and permanent residents with a permanent disability) - Free for Lifetime Pass

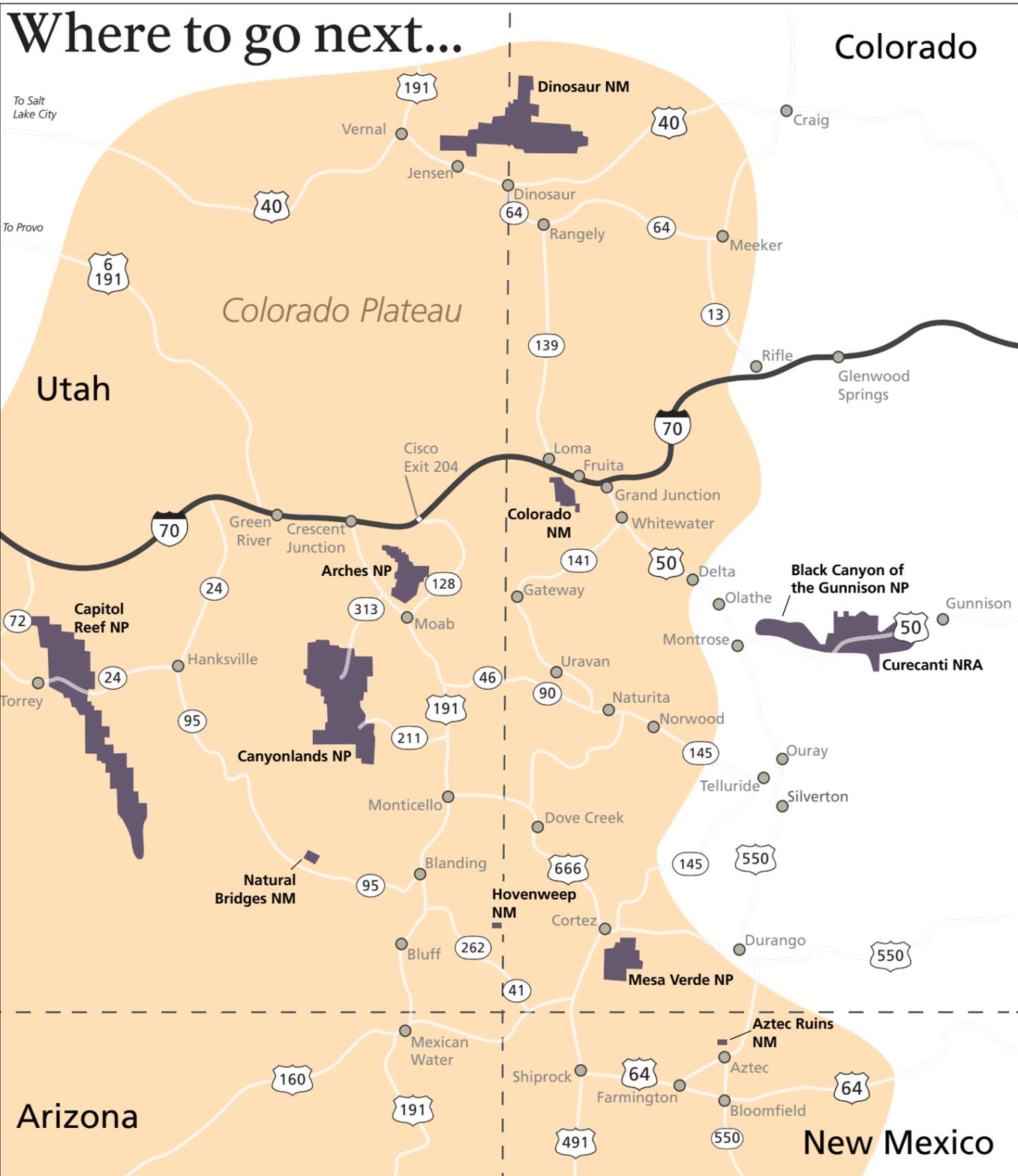
Your Fee Dollars at Work

Did you know that your entrance and camping fees help improve the park? We use the fees collected here for trail repairs, facility improvements and visitor services. Thank you for supporting your national parks.

User Fee Projects Completed in 2012

- Trail repairs in No Thoroughfare Canyon
- Concrete repairs and railing replacement at Cold Shivers Point Overlook



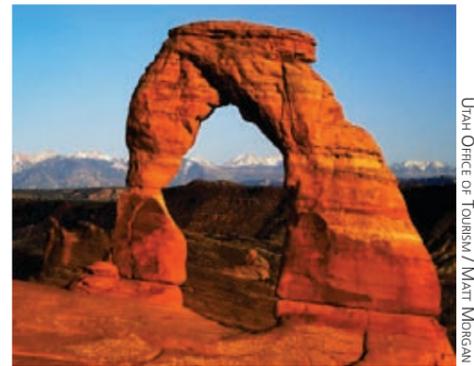


Destination	Distance	Drive Time	Destination	Distance	Drive Time
Arches NP/Moab	115 miles	2 hours	Denver, CO	260 miles	4½ hours
Aspen, CO	145 miles	2½ hours	Dinosaur NM	125 miles	3 hours
Black Canyon NP	90 miles	2 hours	Salt Lake City, UT	275 miles	4½ hours
Canyonlands NP	120 miles	2½ hours			



© Joey Griggs

1. Black Canyon of the Gunnison
The Gunnison River cut 2,000 feet into ancient rocks to carve this dramatic canyon. If you are headed south on Highway 50, be sure to make the side trip to this unique park. (2 hour drive)



Utah Office of Tourism / Matt Morgan

2. Arches National Park
The name says it all. From I-70, take Highway 191 south or Highway 128 along the Colorado River to this classic stop on the Colorado Plateau. (2 hour drive)



© Bill Hood

3. Dinosaur National Monument
This remote park offers breathtaking canyon vistas, exciting rafting opportunities and a world famous dinosaur quarry. Take Highway 139 north over Douglas Pass. (3 hour drive)

Colorado National Monument Association

Join us in Preserving our National Treasure

Colorado National Monument Association (CNMA), a nonprofit organization, exists solely to assist and support Colorado National Monument. Proceeds from our retail operations, memberships and donations support the monument's educational programs and scientific research, helping visitors better understand and connect to this premier geologic and recreational gem in Western Colorado.

CNMA Store at the visitor center

It's more than just books...

calendars	hats	tote bags
CDs & DVDs	Junior Ranger gear	toys
clothing	magnets	visors
cuddly animals	maps	water bottles & more
games	t-shirts	

Free Wi-fi available at the visitor center.

Annual Membership Fees

Individual \$30
Family \$45
Community Partner \$100
Monument Guardian \$250
John Otto Benefactor \$500

Membership Benefits

- 15% discount at CNMA Store
- Reciprocal discounts at participating park stores
- Monthly E-newsletter
- Advance notice of special events

To Become a Member
www.coloradonma.org 970-858-3617 ext. 308 or 307

Area Information

Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road Grand Jct., CO 81506
970-244-3000 www.blm.gov

Colorado State Parks
361 32 Road Clifton, CO 81520
970-434-6862 www.parks.state.co.us

Colorado Welcome Center
340 Hwy 340 Fruita, CO 81521
970-858-9335 www.colorado.com/fruitawelcomecenter.aspx

Fruita Chamber of Commerce
432 East Aspen Ave. Fruita, CO 81521
970-858-3894 www.fruitachamber.org

Grand Junction Visitor & Convention Bureau
740 Horizon Dr. Grand Jct., CO 81506
800-962-2547
www.visitgrandjunction.com

US Forest Service
2777 Crossroads Blvd. Unit 1
Grand Jct., CO 81506
970-242-8211 www.fs.fed.us